

South Dakota National Guard
Public Affairs Office
2823 West Main St.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil

July 21, 2008
PAO 07-21-08

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

South Dakota leadership visit Suriname

*Story by Pfc. Jacqueline Fitzgerald
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
South Dakota Army National Guard*

PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Leaders from the South Dakota National Guard and S.D. State Department spent three days visiting Suriname officials from July 14-17, to help familiarize themselves with the country's military operations, tourism industry and to visit SDNG service members conducting engineering projects.

Maj. Gen. Steven R. Doohen, adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Keith W. Corbett, assistant adjutant general, and other leadership from the South Dakota National Guard, along with Richard Brenda, S.D. secretary of the Department of Tourism and State Development met with Lisa Bobbie Schreiber Hughes, U.S./Suriname ambassador, and Clifford Marica, Suriname minister of defense, to discuss way to improve the interactions between Suriname and S.D.

“The embassy is working with Suriname to line up more direct flights to the U.S. Maybe some of the things we do in the state partnership can help affect that goal,” said Doohen.

The State Partnership Program's purpose is to increase military, government, and civilian interactions between the U.S. and foreign partner nations. This was the first time most of the officials had been to Suriname since it was established in August 2006. 2008 is the first year the SDNG has had the opportunity to be actively supporting engineering projects in Suriname. The projects included improvements and renovation of three medical clinics and three schools all located in or near the capitol city of Paramaribo.

“The trip gave us an opportunity to reestablish relationships with the people of Suriname as well as see our great South Dakota Soldiers doing humanitarian work here,” said Corbett.

The officials were briefed at all three engineer sites on the progress of projects and working conditions. They had the chance to sit down and talk to the working Soldiers to get a better understanding of what challenges the workers are experiencing.

“I’ve been told the humidity is the biggest obstacle for work here but it’s important to remember how crucial this type of training can be,” said Doohen.

Between attending meetings and talking with Soldiers, the group had a busy three days. Doohen and Corbett said they were impressed with the progress so far and eager to see what results will come from the next rotation of Soldiers coming to complete projects.

“I’m really proud of the professional work our men and women are doing,” said Corbett. “All of our Soldiers are hard working and friendly, making them great representatives of our state.”

Photo Cut Lines:



080714-A-5202T-109: PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Pfc. Kale Skogen, of White, a member of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, shakes hands with Maj. Gen. Steven R. Doohen, adjutant general, SDNG, on Monday, July 14, during his visit to engineer project sites at Beyond the Horizon 2008 in Paramaribo, Suriname. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080714-A-5202T-109.jpg>



080714-A-5202T-112: PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Brig. Gen. Keith W. Corbett, assistant adjutant general, South Dakota Army National Guard (left) speaks with Spc. Bradley Berema, of Wagner, Spc. Jay Carrol of Winner, and Spc, Kyle Weller of Winner, all members of the 155th Engineer Company, SDARNG, during his tour of one of the engineer projects as part of the Beyond the Horizon exercise on Wednesday, July 16, in Paramaribo, Suriname. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080716-A-5202T-112.jpg>